

Borders

Cordelia Freeman

INTRODUCTION

Despite repeated claims that we are living in an increasingly borderless world, physical borders are now more numerous and less porous than ever. From the European migrant crisis to President Trump's border obsessions and Brexit, borders in the modern age are inescapable. Movement around the world can be relatively frictionless for goods and capital, but the majority of the world's people do not enjoy such mobility. Geographers have long been fascinated by borders because they have the dual capacity to divide people and to bring them together. The global resurgence of borders has made these lines on the map ripe for further investigation. This seemingly new era of migration and cross-border mobility needs to be understood in its historical context. Borders are not only geographical phenomena; they are also historical. As Liam O'Dowd (2010, 1034) has argued, 'much contemporary border study lacks an adequate historical analysis of state and nation formation'. It is here that historical geographers can provide a crucial and much-needed perspective.

This chapter examines the languages used when we talk about borders. It considers how different terminologies trace the historical developments in our thinking about territory and the control of space. It then explores the inherent violence of borders and bordering, drawing on examples from the colonial bordering of Latin America. This is followed by an appraisal of work by scholars and activists on the decolonisation of border regimes in the same region, using counter-mapping projects by indigenous groups to illustrate attempts to reclaim power through

cartography. In the final section, on border feminism, the chapter reveals how historical processes of colonialism have affected people, particularly Latina and indigenous women, in different ways. The life of a gender- and border-crossing nun-turned-soldier, Catalina de Erauso, is used to highlight the intertwined nature of border identities and border crossings. Given the dominance of Europe and North America in the Anglophone literature on borders, the Latin American examples presented in this chapter provide an alternative viewpoint to illustrate how the historical processes of bordering have been addressed by scholars and activists.

THE LOGIC OF TERRITORIALITY: FROM FRONTIERS TO BORDERS

In general terms, territory is some form of bounded space claimed by a person, a people, or an institution to wield power. Territoriality is the process of establishing control over such space. The space in question can be viewed from different angles – from inside, from outside and, crucially, from the line marking the division between these two arenas. It is this line that makes discussion of territory important. The world has not always been bounded into political nation states, but we can understand how these spaces came into existence through the evolution of frontiers and borders.

The term ‘frontier’ evokes an unsettled, relatively unknown and dynamic zone, an edge that is continually moving outward from a core region. The term has military origins, meaning the zone facing an enemy (Anderson 1996). Unlike the term ‘periphery’, which implies a more stable and relatively isolated region, frontiers suggest zones that confront and expand into spaces of ‘otherness’ beyond. In continually expanding frontier zones, fixed borders were not easily delineated or demarcated, which can have many advantages for expansive nation-states. The western United States was purposefully viewed as a frontier zone for much of the nineteenth century. The fluidity of this unfolding region, in which US territory was continually created, was politically of enormous value. As Frederick Jackson Turner (2008 [1893]) argued

in a famous lecture, delivered to a special meeting of the American Historical Association at the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago, the expanding western frontier seemed to define the very character of the American people and the political formation of the United States itself.

Just as ‘frontiers’ necessitate movement, so too do ‘empires’. While empires and city-states historically controlled areas of territory, their borders were often vague and flexible. For Charles Maier (2016), the outer reaches of empires have always been spaces of expansion, temporary zones-in-transition from which to push outwards. An empire can be deemed to be successful if its edges are restless and dynamic, rather than fixed lines of defence. Over time, the blurred frontiers of early states and empires came to be replaced by the more clearly delimited borders of the modern nation-state system. While fluctuating frontiers were useful for expanding empires, it seemed that modern nation-states can only survive within clearly delineated borders (Colás 2007).

The nation-state system that still defines the political delimitation of the globe emerged first in early modern Europe. From a patchwork of overlapping jurisdictions and vaguely delineated territories in medieval Europe, a new system of recognisably modern nation-states gradually emerged as discrete and independent geopolitical entities, capable of asserting claims to represent distinctive nations which could be sustained by legal authority and military power. The nation-state system, based on these discrete and bounded spatial units, is often claimed to have emerged from the 1648 Treaties of Westphalia, and acquired additional authority following the movement from monarchical sovereignty towards more popular or national sovereignty in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when nation-states began to define themselves by reference to their populations rather than through the physical presence of a monarch (Foucault 2007).

The nation-state gradually became a normative territory whose political borders appeared increasingly to align with the imagined cultural boundaries of a distinctive nation (Anderson 1983). As these new European states became more powerful, economically and militarily, they were able to demarcate and police their borders more precisely, taking advantage of developments in cartography. Stoked by nationalist sentiments, state borders gradually acquired

a natural and nation-defining quality, as if they were hewn from the fabric of nature itself rather than created by the actions of soldiers and map-makers. Borders became more permanent, initially in Europe and later around the world as the European state system of clearly delineated spaces expanded to other continents through European colonialism, establishing a system of state-controlled law over the most of the earth.

While this process began as control over territory, it soon expanded to the governance of entire populations. Originating in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe, a powerful idea emerged that sought to naturalise links between imagined, later racialised categories of humanity and specific territorial areas. By the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, this new relationship between apparently discrete populations and specific areas of the earth was formalised through the legal concepts of nationality and citizenship (Hollifield and Wong 2014). Passport and visa systems were developed and border regulations became increasingly prevalent. This was particularly true for those deemed to be threats to an established geopolitical order, and passports and other forms of documentation allowed the division of citizens from foreigners. This in turn promoted a greater sense of social homogeneity, reinforcing the capacity of nation-states to define, and thereby govern, their own populace (Torpey 2018). While the control of cross-border mobility is a significant feature of our contemporary world, it has important historical precedence. As William Walters (2006) has argued, drawing on Michel Foucault, the ‘floating populations’ of eighteenth-century Europe were gradually disciplined and converted into fixed, regulated and economically productive societies. Borders served to distinguish the wanted from the dangerous in this new era. Techniques of discrimination and classification became fundamental for systems of border governance, while the control of borders and border crossings was deemed the main prerequisite of sovereignty.

Sovereignty refers to absolute and unequalled power over a specific area, typically a territorial state. This has been enshrined in international law as the right of a government to wield the exclusive right of authority within its territory. Territoriality involves identifying areas or regions but goes beyond mere delimitation. Territoriality is about the control of space, peoples and resources. Only when the outer boundaries are established and controlled does

space become territory. The controller of this territory has the power to police who or what moves across borders, and to change a border's permeability. The edges of territory are so crucial that Wendt (1999) has argued that borders are essential if territory is to become anything more than simply land.

An especially influential debate in this regard has focused on the so-called 'territorial trap', a term coined by John Agnew (1994) to encapsulate how state borders, conventionally located at the geographical edges of a given polity, have come to define the territorial limits of sovereign political authority and jurisdiction. The territorial trap assumes that the physical borders of nation-states map onto boundaries formed by other social, cultural and political processes, and are relatively stable, naturalising an idea of the nation as a homogeneous community defined by clear and fixed borders. In a series of influential interventions, Stuart Elden (2010a, 2010b, 2013b) has successfully brought a deeper historical and geographical understanding to the term 'territory', arguing that the concept's complex evolution has been neglected. Elden outlines the development of the idea of territory in western political thought and stresses that the concept has always meant more than 'land' and 'terrain', although it is certainly related to both these ideas. Elden argues that we should not define territory simply as a bounded or bordered space, or at least not without unpacking the terms 'boundaries' and 'space' conceptually and historically. Just as bordering has been seen as a process, Elden insists that territory 'is a process, not an outcome; not so far from what is increasingly being understood as an assemblage, continually made and remade' (Elden 2013a, 36). As Child and Barnes demonstrate elsewhere in this volume, territory has come to be understood as a way of making and controlling political space, while territoriality is defined as the practice of creating, controlling and dominating space.

While the recent work of Elden and others has been critical in deepening our understanding of what territory means and how it relates to power, other scholars have argued that the concept is still too limited by the western intellectual tradition within which it was been examined. According to Clare, Habermehl and Mason-Deese (2018, 304), the Anglophone literature on territory has been 'narrow, Eurocentric, and retains a residual statism caused by

one-dimensional understandings of power'. In their view, previous work 'risks missing the multiple ways in which territory is constructed, the role of non-state actors, and the myriad alternative practices of territory developed by social movements around the world' (Clare et al. 2018, 304). As a corrective, the authors contemplate the two Spanish words for power – *poder* (meaning 'power over') and *potencia* (meaning 'power to') in order to understand how these different but related ideas are mobilised territorially. Using examples from indigenous and urban-territorial movements in Latin America, Clare et al. (2017) challenge Anglophone understandings of territory. Other scholars have sought to adapt non-western ideas of territory to reflect the lived experiences of borders beyond Europe and North America. Haesbaert (2013), for example, uses 'multi-territoriality' to consider how territory can be viewed not as singular and discrete, but as layered and overlapping, thereby avoiding Agnew's 'territorial trap'.

Although most work on territory has focused on land, Peters, Steinberg and Stratford (2018) argue that we need also to think about territory beyond *terra* or land. By focusing on other elements, such as water, air and environments that muddle the definition of land such as mudflats and ice, the authors question whether land as traditionally conceived is an adequate categorisation when thinking about territory. The sea was, of course, the defining geopolitical arena for burgeoning British, Spanish, Portuguese, French and Dutch empires, all of which sought to control oceanic space. But as Steinberg (1999) notes, lines on maps of oceans and seas have historically served to illustrate connections, route-ways and passages rather than demarcate the divisions, borders and frontiers between rival powers (Steinberg 1999). Struggles over sovereign rights in the ocean are relatively new because the ocean has historically been constructed as unboundable and empty, rather than as a space of control and fixity (Steinberg 2009).

THE VIOLENCE OF THE BORDER

To speak of borders inescapably means speaking of violence. As this section will show, delineating, demarcating and maintaining borders have been inherently violent processes. As Reece Jones (2016, 5) argues, 'the existence of the border itself produces the violence that

surrounds it'. The bordering of the world is so prevalent that it seems a natural and inevitable undertaking and we define nations and territories by where they begin and where they end (Agnew 2007; Grosby 1995). The state wields power over space and the making and breaking of borders is part of how states configure their domination and control of space. State boundaries represent the limits of state control and are therefore maintained by force, or the threat of force.

Overt displays of power at borders are one way that states can cement their long-term goals of standing firm, what Snyder and Diesing (1977, 185) have termed their 'reputation for resolve'. According to Nicholas De Genova (2013), the 'border spectacle' involves making migrant 'illegality' more spectacularly visible, whether through newspaper front-pages plastered with images of migrants scaling fences or by hyper-militarised border guards policing checkpoints and crossings. Whether contemporary or historical, there has always been an intrinsic power in border demarcation and maintenance. To understand this power, we need to inquire in whose interests it is exercised (Popescu 2012). For Claudio Minca and Nick Vaughan-Williams (2012, 760) 'the principle of sovereign power is based on an original act of violence' and the border becomes a way to fix and spatialise such violence. Historical perspectives allow us to examine the acts of violence through which borders and sovereign power are brought into being.

Ideas of territory, as discussed earlier, are imbued with power. Scholars such as Stuart Elden, Barry Hindess and William Connolly have emphasised that the words 'territory' and 'terror' both derive from the Latin root *terrere*, which may suggest the role of terror in the very functioning of the state. For Hindess (2006, 244), 'territory is associated with the threat of violence toward those who do belong, as much as to those who do not'. Modern states do not use the threat of violence merely to ward off those who threaten the state from without, for they also have the capacity for violent action against their own people. Terror, argues Hindess, is ultimately what states are for and what they are expected to do. In spite of the contemporary usage of the term 'terrorism' that suggests actions wielded *against* states, those that inhabit a

state's territory are never entirely free from this threat. In his work on territory and violence, William Connolly insists that territory is, by definition, 'land occupied and bounded by violence' (Connolly 1995, xxii). While acknowledging that to territorialise is to create boundaries to warn off outsiders, Connolly also acknowledges that this kind of state violence is not directed solely at those from beyond the borders. While boundaries 'form indispensable protections against violation and violence ... the divisions they sustain also carry cruelty and violence' (Connolly 1995, 153). Violence is an inherent part of creating borders, but the very existence of these spatial divisions serves to naturalise the violence through which they are created.

One clear example of the historical relationship between violence and borders has been the bordering practices of European colonial powers. The following section demonstrates how European colonialism created the state system of Latin America and how that subcontinent was, and continues to be, shaped by this process.

The bordering of Latin America

The colonisation of Latin America by European powers was a violent process, and borders imposed in this region by European colonial powers have had an enduring influence on the lives and livelihoods of Latin Americans (Lovell 1992). Liam O'Dowd (2010) argues that we need to 'bring history back in' to our studies of borders as imperial strategies of territorialisation still permeate the fabric of modern nation-states. Historic maps provide one illustration of how these strategies of territorialisation took place.

The process of colonial bordering can be illustrated by reference to European maps of Latin America. As Dym and Offen (2011, 11) explain, 'In the early modern period, the mapping of Latin America was part of a process of claiming ownership and building and hiding knowledge of land, trade routes, and peoples'. Maps were drawn by colonial powers to reveal and promote their territorial aspirations. Diego Gutiérrez's *Americae* (1562), shown in Figure 27.1, was commissioned to show the Spanish Crown's conquests in the New World for a wider

European audience, not least in Portugal and France, Spain's closest European rivals (Hébert 2011). Although the most important border in Latin America at the time was the famous line demarcated the Spanish and Portuguese territories, as agreed at the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494), the Gutiérrez map, produced almost seven decades later, notably failed to include this division, as if to assert the potential of Spain to ignore or override its territorial agreements with its principal imperial rival.

[Insert figure 27.1 here]

Maps depicting Latin America as a patchwork of emerging nation-states, similar to those depicting Europe as system of territorial units, began to emerge in the seventeenth century. The map shown in Figure 27.2, taken from Alexis-Hubert Jaillot's 1692 *Atlas Nouveau* and based on an earlier 1650 map by fellow French cartographer Nicolas Sanson, shows the boundaries of European possessions and claims across South America. Widely viewed at the time as one of the more detailed and accurate representations of Latin America, the map includes a table on the bottom right with scales used by the five main western Europe powers: Italy, France, Spain, Germany and England. The audience for this map was, it seems, international, but only in a limited, European sense. This was an image of an entire sub-continent designed by and for Europeans so they could gaze upon, and compare, their newly-established imperial territories. The map's cartouches portray the indigenous populations of South America, naked and holding weapons or performing daily tasks, alongside representations of the region's flora and fauna. The still emerging borders commonly followed geographical features, such as the mountains of the Andes or the region's vast river basins, rather than the territorial practices of indigenous populations.

[Insert figure 27.2 here]

As a European map created for a European audience, Jaillot's map – and many similar images produced in subsequent centuries – entirely ignored how Latin Americans inhabited or represented their own continent. For the Argentine theorist Walter Mignolo (1992), the

imposition of western graphic representations of Latin America has resulted, over the centuries, in a larger 'colonisation of space'. Indigenous mapping traditions and geographical sensibilities were gradually displaced, claims Mignolo, by 'elements such as scale, orientation, projection, lettering and symbols' which were entirely European (Dym and Offen 2011, 9). As European colonial powers established control over parts of Africa, Asia and the Americas, they imposed European practices of territorial control and bordering. Existing ways of organising territory were largely ignored in favour of the idealised European version of the modern state system. According to Merrell (2004, 4), the bordering of Latin America first occurred in the imagination of early European explorers and the subsequent mapping of its physical borders meant that this entire region was 'fashioned rather than found'. These lands were seen as *terra nullis*, with minimal reference to the inhabitants and territorial practices that were clearly present when the colonial powers arrived. As colonial administration became a key goal for European colonisers no longer content with asserting economic control over the colonised areas, so the delimitation of colonial borders became more pressing.

These often-arbitrary borders were intended to carve out national spaces in scarcely populated 'frontier' borderlands of Latin America (Baud 2000). The region became, in this way, a counter-space to Europe, a remade world, a promised land – different from Europe, but forged in the same geographical terms. Much of this 'newly created political space was rooted in a kind of racial 'othering' of Latin American societies. In his work on order in colonial and postcolonial Peruvian geography, Benjamin Orlove examines the historical shifts in the enactment of power over both the physical terrain but the local inhabitants. In his view, 'colonial orderings emphasized historicized racial differences among persons within a relatively balanced and homogeneous space, while postcolonial orderings stressed naturalized regional differences among places within a homogeneous, though covertly racialized, population' (Orlove 1993, 301).

Versions of environmental determinism were employed to represent 'Indians' in geographical discourse, as people shaped by the geographical spaces they inhabited. Borderlands become spaces of subjugation and control at the moment of territorial expansion,

but that does not mean that violence ended once the territory was consolidated under the nation-state. In his influential work, Michael Taussig (1987) examined colonialism in South America and the imposition of colonialism on the ‘wild’ indigenous population, with particular reference to rubber plantations in the Putomayo region of Columbia, a ‘space of death’ where British capitalists inflicted a reign of terror against indigenous people, their culture and their collective memory. Although his salient point is to emphasise the long-term *effect* of violent state-building and colonialism *on bodies* of local inhabitants.

This is not to say that the Europeans have been the only powers to assert cartographic control over Latin America. The United States has a complex, violent and asymmetrical relationship with Latin America which can be traced with reference to twentieth-century mapping. When the American Geographical Society began working on the million-scale Hispanic Map in the early 1920s, it was a cartographic and scientific landmark. This topographic map illustrates the US imperial project to underscore its power over its perceived ‘backyard’ (Livingstone 2009). The Hispanic Map effaced the existing Latin American borders completely, thereby emphasising the universalising neo-imperial power of the United States to capture the continent’s physical environment in a single image (Pearson and Heffernan 2009). The cartographic eradication of the continent’s political geography made the entire region equally amenable to US imperial power.

The complex history of colonialism and violence in Latin America has resulted in difficulties over the rights and responsibilities of demarcating and crossing borders. During the eighteenth century, Latin Americans became increasingly conscious of their difference from Europe, and the French revolution in particular fomented radical ideals across Latin America (Robinson 1990). Questions were raised about how Latin America would be structured and administered after throwing off the yoke of imperialism. After the collapse of the Spanish and Portuguese empires in the nineteenth century, nation building in South America truly began, despite political and military leader Simón Bolívar’s attempts to keep Spanish-speaking territories unified. Various conflicts took place between the fledgling nations in order to assert power and define borders, including the War of the Pacific (1879–83) and the War of the Triple

Alliance (1864–70). Colonial borders were rarely demarcated and were, according to Bruslé (2007), relatively permeable frontiers.

Present-day state borders in Latin America exist largely thanks to the principles of *uti possidetis juris* (legal possession) and *uti possidetis de facto* (effective possession), which were held up in struggles for independence from colonial powers. Simón Bolívar emphatically pursued *uti possidetis juris* to temporarily fix Spanish administrative units that could then be reworked and demarcated as appropriate (Parodi 2002). Yet these administrative units have persisted beyond Bolívar's expectations and many of these boundaries, which were drawn from afar by colonial powers with little knowledge of the territories, remain. Border theorists must be wary of overthinking this persistence, however, due to the prevalence of Latin American scholars falling into Agnew's (1994) aforementioned 'territorial trap' – of trusting too much in the supposed fixity of territory, of states and of identities. Yet even after independence, border demarcation in Latin America was prohibited, to a substantial degree, to the physical geography of the continent with impermeable tropical forests and towering mountain ranges (Amilhat-Szary 2007).

Borders in South America are 'pressure points', and with over 18,000 miles of borders they are undoubtedly central to the history, geography and character of the continent (Bolin 1992, 172). Border disputes have been rife in Latin America, with 83 territorial claims between nation-states between 1816 and 1992 (Hensel 2001). Yet while forces have often been deployed and conflict has occurred, the escalation to full-scale war has been rare and, in global comparison, the continent was relatively free from interstate warfare during the twentieth century (Domínguez et al. 2003). The legal principle of *uti possidetis juris* has been key in the management of Latin American border conflicts. The idea of a shared commonality, particularly in South America, has also helped deter leaders from armed conflict in favour of a Bolivarian entity based on a balance of power for mutual benefit. Elites across the continent tend to accept that there was a larger cultural and political project at stake and war would only be detrimental. However, although interstate war due to border disputes has been rare, border disputes have persisted on the continent. They often remain dormant for decades and flare up

on anniversary dates or with the discovery of resources in a disputed area. These border disputes have mainly stemmed from the colonial demarcation of sparsely populated areas that became increasingly settled and known.

The *uti possidetis juris* doctrine used by Latin American countries in border demarcation and border disputes established that when a state achieves independence from its colonisers it inherits the borders drawn by the colonial power. The administrative borders of the colony thereby become international borders. Given the impermeable nature of much of the Latin American landscape, *uti possidetis* was the simplest and most resource-effective approach to the demarcation of borders. This approach led to a smooth transition to international borders in some areas, but conflict and ongoing disputes in others. Peaceful diplomacy has been the ideal solution for these disputes, often with a neutral third party involved. Throughout Latin American history the neutral party has varied between the British monarchy (Chile–Argentina Beagle Conflict, 1978), the Organization of American States (particularly in Central America) and with many being resolved at the International Court of Justice at The Hague.

Colonial bordering has not just had violent effects with the arrival of the colonisers, but also with their retreat. Many of the territorial disputes that have occurred in mainland Latin America, for example, are a result of decolonisation. As the following examples show, the legacies of colonialism have led to violent and ongoing border conflicts. Independence did not necessarily mean that colonial advances by European powers ceased. There have been three cases whereby claims by Britain has erupted in serious territorial disputes. These are directly involving the United Kingdom in the case of The Falklands/Las Malvinas or indirectly in the cases of Guatemala and Belize, and Venezuela and Guyana.

The Venezuela/Guyana dispute over the Essequibo region remains ongoing today. During the Latin American Wars of Independence, Venezuela staked a claim of around half of the territory of the then British colony of Guyana. In 1840, Britain's Royal Geographical Society commissioned Robert Schomburgk to survey and mark out the boundaries of British Guyana (Burnett 2001). Schomburgk drew a boundary between British Guyana and Venezuela based on his surveys and this was presented to the Venezuelans. Venezuela rejected the

boundary, claiming that as Spain had explored the area of the Essequibo River before the Dutch, it should rightfully belong to Venezuela. Arbitration in 1899 settled the dispute but only temporarily as Venezuela later rejected the new decision. The dispute flared again as recently as 2015 when oil was discovered in the Essequibo region and the International Court of Justice has been appointed to resolve the dispute unless the two countries agree otherwise.

The Guatemala/Belize dispute similarly emerges from British boundary demarcation. Guatemala has been heavily shaped from the violence and conflict of the colonial period, with the sharpest effects felt by Mayan communities (Lovell 2010). From the Guatemalan perspective, the current border dispute is rooted in the 1859 boundary treaty with Britain, which claims Guatemala inherited the British occupied territory that is now Belize from Spain. While the treaty recognised British presence, it would not recognise sovereignty unless the British successfully built a road to connect British Honduras (present-day Belize) with Guatemala City. As the road was never built, Guatemala claims that the treaty was invalid, and the territory of Belize should therefore be returned to Guatemala. Again, like with the Venezuela/Guyana case, the dispute rages today and in 2018 Guatemalans voted overwhelmingly to send the case to the International Court of Justice for final determination of the boundary. To date, the Belize referendum has yet to be held.

While these two disputes have been predominantly political, Latin American border disputes were often violent, notably the 1995 conflict between Ecuador and Peru. The conflict, initiated by Ecuador, led to the mobilisation of military forces in both countries and an estimated death toll of 500. The dispute concerned the sovereignty of a remote area along the Amazonian boundary between the two countries. Under the terms of a 1942 treaty, which favoured Peru, Ecuador had lost large sections of the Amazon rainforest as well as direct access to the Amazon River. Subsequent Ecuadorian governments resented the agreement into which they had been rushed by the guarantors: Argentina, Brazil, Chile and the United States. However, the root cause of the conflict went back much further to disagreements over edicts drawn up by Spain in the seventeenth century. When it achieved independence from Spain, Ecuador formed part of Gran Colombia, which included the modern-day territories of

Venezuela, Ecuador, Colombia and Panama. Due to this long history, when Ecuador separated from Colombia in 1830, the two countries maintained an ‘amicable’ relationship (Radcliffe 1998). The 1830 Pedemonte–Mosquera Protocol, drawn up in the absence of any reliable maps of the disputed area, established the Marañon–Amazon River as the border between Peru and Ecuador, although Peru later contested this, setting in train a sequence of often violent clashes that led eventually to the 1995 conflict, eventually resolved three years later when Ecuador was awarded a small section of largely symbolic territory from Peru.

The bordering of Latin America has been inherently violent. Borders in Latin America, from their colonial past to the independence movement and as ruled by dictators, have all in some way ignored the voices of the most marginalised, particularly indigenous Latin Americans and women. The next section focuses on marginalisation and considers how border regimes and border imperialism have been contested.

DECOLONISING BORDER REGIMES

The term ‘border regime’ has been employed to encourage ‘an epistemological, conceptual and methodological shift in the way we think about, how we envision, and how we research borders’ (Casas-Cortes et al. 2015, 69). The phrase focuses on borders as sites of struggle and resistance and emphasises their complex social, economic, political and cultural conditions. A border regime perspective allows borders to be considered as temporary rather than as naturalised facts. This section takes the border regime idea to think through the ways that border activists and communities have rejected hegemonic, colonial borders and sought instead to decolonise these spaces.

The project to decolonise knowledge of Latin America’s history and geography has been led by the aforementioned Walter D. Mignolo. As previously noted, Mignolo argues that Latin America has been systematically dominated by Eurocentric thought, but he also insists that even Anglophone postcolonial theory has largely overlooked Latin America, despite the enduring legacy of European colonialism across the sub-continent. To escape from these

intellectual constraints, Mignolo (2012, 11) proposes ‘border gnosis’ or ‘border thinking’ as means of including subaltern perspectives to reshape what is accepted as legitimate knowledge in, and of, Latin America. Border gnosis, Mignolo argues, creates a new form ‘knowledge from a subaltern perspective conceived from the exterior borders of the modern/colonial world system’, an epistemology that helps to counter the hegemonic knowledge perpetuated by Occidentalism. Mignolo’s ideas have been widely deployed by activists and have directly informed their strategies.

Some border scholars and activists have focused their work on the concepts of ‘open borders’ and ‘no borders’ (Pécoud and de Guchteneire 2007). Mobility and freedom of movement have been impeded by borders and regulatory systems that were borne out of a colonial past. The removal of such borders would remove this system of population control and injustice with it. This is not to say that the acceptance of borders has historically been passively accepted. The control of bodies and movement at borders has always been resisted and borders have been refused for as long as they have existed (Anderson, Sharma and Wright 2009). Anti-border politics has mobilised around specific periods, such as the 1954 US government programme Operation Wetback. This resulted in over 1 million people being forced to leave the United States for Mexico and led to the exclamation: ‘No one is illegal.’

The phrase ‘no one is illegal’ has become a rallying point for many anti-border activists. In *Undoing Border Imperialism* (2013), Harsha Walia and her co-authors draw on their experiences with the No One Is Illegal network and other migrant justice and indigenous movements. Walia is highly critical of the modern nation-state and the practices of containment embedded in colonialism. Walia takes a global perspective to show how Canadian border enforcement impacts First Nation communities within Canada but the same system of oppression affects communities in Pakistan and Afghanistan through economic and military domination. By taking such an approach, Walia is able to highlight how border controls, capitalism, social inequalities and labour exploitation intersect.

A historical perspective is important here to be able to trace the colonial practices of the past to the surveillance and ‘border enforcement’ that happens not just at state borders, but also

in city streets, workplaces and homes. Border enforcement is not about protecting territory, argues Walia, but rather about the maintenance of systemic social hierarchies. The historical legacies of border imperialism have very real impacts for those who are attempting to cross borders as well as for indigenous communities around and through whom borders have been drawn and redrawn (Walia 2013).

While ‘no border’ activists and scholars have been criticised for being utopian or unrealistic, an important space of debate has been opened. Mezzadra and Neilson (2013, 13–14) have argued that these ‘...border struggles open a new continent of political possibilities, a space within which new kinds of political subjects, which abide neither the logic of citizenship nor established methods of radical political organization and action, can trace their movements and multiply their powers’. The ‘no borders’ movement isn’t just rejecting borders, but territorial statehood and nationhood too (Bauder 2014). Others have argued that the ‘no border’ project is very much in effect and that more people are crossing borders than ever before (Anderson, Sharma and Wright 2009). Moreover, a historical perspective is again important here in reminding us that militarised borders are a recent phenomenon, that borders have always been refused, and that the current practices of citizenship that shape our world today have not always existed.

While the ‘no borders’ project focuses on decolonising border regimes at a global scale, borders across the world have seen their own strategies for shifting power at more local scales. The following section looks at counter-mapping in Latin America and how it has been used to challenge colonial border regimes. Such challenges serve to illustrate that even though borders exist to fix and categorise power, this fixity can be questioned.

Counter-mapping the border

Alternative border imaginaries can shift the way we conceptualise the border. In an ambitious edited collection, Dym and Offen’s (2011) show how cartography allowed the de-politicisation of Latin American space in order to seize land and maintain the status quo regarding social inequalities. However, they also highlight examples of counter-mapping that have challenged

the assimilation of indigenous communities into hegemonic national identities. Harley (1989) argued that maps are not just expressions of power, but they are also *instruments* of power. Maps have been critical to the maintenance of state power and of bordering, as shown earlier, but groups have used subversive or counter-maps to harness the power of cartography for anti-state or postcolonial ends. If, for Van Houtum (2012, 412), ‘cartopolitics in its core ... is cartographic cleansing. It consciously silences what is not represented and it dehumanises the landscape’, then counter-mapping can humanise the landscape and give a voice to what has not been represented. Counter-mapping provides a way directly to engage historical processes of territorialisation.

Counter-maps often sit within what Offen (2003) terms the ‘territorial turn’, the recent shift which has led many Latin American states to recognise land claims made by indigenous and black communities. Doreen Massey (1995) highlighted this with reference to indigenous communities in Honduras, who were excluded from ‘official’ maps of the area in which they lived. For anyone viewing the maps, the inhabited land appeared unpopulated and ripe for exploitation. Once the indigenous communities were able to draw their own maps, their presence and use of the land could be represented, an important step towards empowerment. This can be a direct conversation with historical maps drawn up by colonisers.

However, even when counter-mapping is actively encouraged, the pre-existing geographical imagination created by established state borders can be difficult to challenge. As André Reyes Novaes demonstrates, the attempt by a Colombian newspaper, *El Tiempo*, to promote debate about ‘bi-national integration’ between Columbia and Venezuela in 2000 by means of a mapping project proved less than entirely successful. In this example, the newspaper published an outline map of the two countries without the intervening border, and invited artists from across the region to insert new spatial representations within the combined space ‘in order to experience border areas and produce texts and images on trans-border processes and shared identities’ (Novaes 2015, 126). To the newspaper editor’s surprise, several artists re-inscribed the border into the space from which it had been erased. Even when promoting greater

integration, most respondents acknowledged the legitimacy of Columbia and Venezuela as distinctive spatial categories. Erasing a border between the two countries on paper evidently did not remove the border from the minds and lived experiences of local people. As Novaes concluded, this exercise reveals the strength of national geopolitical imaginations that have been established over many decades, fashioned by mutually hostile government policies in both countries. The border is now so firmly entrenched in the national imaginaries on both sides of the border that even the most explicit attempts to create a counter narrative seem to have failed. Historical bordering is persistent.

Work on counter-mapping among indigenous communities in Latin America has also attempted to de-romanticise the notion that indigenous maps are always progressive and constructive in contrast to negative, racist colonial maps. Wainwright and Bryan (2009, 154), for example, take issue with claims that indigenous maps simply replace ‘bad’ colonial maps with ‘good’ anti-colonial ones. While legal-cartographic strategy often ‘reinforces differences and inequalities in the colonial present’, it can also aim ‘to correct the injustices of the colonial past by extending property rights to indigenous peoples’. It should not be assumed that indigenous maps will not reproduce unequal social relations in the same manner that colonial maps have in the past. Using case studies of counter-mapping projects from Belize and Nicaragua, they seek to ‘leverage indigenous claims away from territorial approaches that imply a direct challenge to the state, and towards property rights, which deepen capitalist social relations’ (Wainwright and Bryan 2009, 155). While historical inequalities are reorganised, they are not abolished.

Wainwright and Bryan also question whose knowledge is involved in indigenous mapping. Geographical knowledge tends to be seen as the domain of older men in indigenous communities, thereby creating a gendered dimension with an emphasis on territory in terms of hunting, fishing and timber collection, which they term ‘differential empowerment’. They also note that in Belize, the process of mapping indigenous claims led directly to border disagreements with nearby communities, diverting energy from challenging state power and towards disputes with neighbouring villages. While these mapping projects aimed to empower

indigenous communities, they instead put indigenous land on the map, thereby giving the state the necessary resources to control disputed lands. Indigenous groups were not able address persistent inequalities, and by promoting entrenched indigenous land claims, mapping projects served merely to ingrain the idea of property rights, state power and capitalist social relations. A more effective indigenous strategy, argue Wainwright and Bryan, would be to destabilise rather than reinforce the power relations that have so negatively impacted on these communities.

Wainwright and Bryan are not the only scholars to have reached these conclusions. In her work on indigenous and Afro-descendant mapping projects in Honduras, Mollett (2013, 1227) argues that ‘racial power and racialized processes constrain the emancipatory possibilities of counter mapping in multiple ways’. Counter-mapping grew in popularity as technologies became more accessible and were seen as a tool to support communities in their land rights negotiations with the state. However, their utility as a tool does have limits and mapping projects have failed ‘to disrupt persistent racial ideologies that presuppose and naturalize ... inferiority’ (Mollett 2013, 1229).

Artistic interventions that ‘play’ with maps of Latin America can also attempt to problematise colonial legacies. One well-known example of this is *América Invertida* (1943) by the Uruguayan artist Joaquín Torres García. The ‘inverted map’ is a simple line drawing of South America that has been flipped with the south at the top of the map. The purpose of this is to question the European imposition of knowledge onto Latin America and to shift the perspective of how ‘north’ and ‘south’ relate to one another. Maps have been used as tools of oppression and a way to maintain the status quo by colonial powers and elites. Counter-mapping attempts by indigenous groups and artists in Latin America have sought to question this status quo, even if they have not always succeeded in taking the power away from such elites.

INHABITING THE BORDER

Research on borders, particularly from a historical perspective, often ignores those who live in the vicinity of these divisions, who move back and forth across them, and who are most directly

affected by their presence. Critical work since the 1980s, notably border feminism, has begun to address this failing. Border feminism, one of the most salient developments in understanding how borders operate, has demonstrated with particular clarity how colonialism continues to affect the lives of border people, particularly Latina and indigenous women, in different ways.

Border feminism emerged in the 1980s, largely from Chicana activists and scholars in the United States. Border feminists such as Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa considered themselves activists first and academics second, and have challenged ‘boundaries defined by the hegemony. ... For the Chicana feminist it is through our affiliation with the struggles of other Third World people that we find our theories and our methods’ (Saldívar-Hull 1991, 220). These feminist insights have been able to place the body and bio-politics into bordering, migration and the governance of mobility (Mezzandra and Neilson 2013). Border feminism draws heavily on postcolonial feminist theories and therefore directly confronts colonial histories.

Gloria Anzaldúa’s conceptualisation of ‘border identity’ stems from the US Southwest–Mexican border but is constructed through psychological boundaries such as ethnicity and sexuality, resulting in a place of neglect and peripherality (Anzaldúa 1987). In her view, ‘[a] border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition. The prohibited and forgotten are its inhabitants’ (Anzaldúa 1987, 3). The population of the borderlands inhabit a ‘third country’, different from the two countries on either side of the border but with cultural expectations and influences taken from both. Anzaldúa’s semi-autobiographical work experiments with poetry and prose and weaves between Spanish and English, which she argues is the only way to describe the US–Mexico border experience. This pulling of two worlds reflects the violent histories of the borderlands. Her work on borders has dealt with the violent legacies of European colonialism in the Americas, largely resultant from imposed categories of race, gender and sexuality. These

legacies of colonialism have forced those who inhabit the borderlands into the interstices between dominant cultures and identities.

Anzaldúa's borderlands concept has been highly influential, but it has also been criticised by Pablo Vila, who challenges the tendency to focus on border metaphors. Drawing on research in the environs of Ciudad Juárez-El Paso, Vila and his co-workers suggest that the history of the US–Mexico border has not created a homogeneous experience for all. An over-reliance on a metaphorical border has failed to address the lives of diverse people who inhabit this region, he argues, and can lead to any physical or psychic space being labelled a border. In Vila's analysis, borderland metaphors detract from literal borders and constructs 'the border crosser or the hybrid ... [as] ... a new privileged subject of history' (Vila 2003, 307).

Anzaldúa (2000, 176) eventually rejected the borderlands metaphor herself, as she 'found that people were using "Borderlands" in a more limited sense' than she had originally suggested. Instead, she began to use the *nahuatl* word '*nepantla*' to refer to psychic and emotional borderlands. *Nepantla* refers to an in-between space, traversed when moving from one place to another, which includes shifting identities with regards to class, sexuality and race. Historical geography can provide an important perspective on such identities. This shifting of identities can also be part of what constitutes a border crossing in a more literal sense, and not only in our contemporary world. This can be illustrated by reference to the extraordinary border crossings and identity transformations of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Basque nun-turned-soldier, Catalina de Erauso.

A transborder life: Catalina de Erauso

Any historical geography of borders should seek to examine border crossings by real individuals, some of whom changed their identities in the process. This can be exemplified by the life and travels of Catalina de Erauso, a genderqueer border crosser who reveals the complex ideologies of imperial power (Figure 27.3).¹ For Anzaldúa (2009, 209), 'the new mestiza is a liminal subject who lives in the borderlands between cultures, races, languages, and genders. In this state of in-betweenness the mestiza can mediate, translate, negotiate, and navigate these

different locations'. Erauso can perhaps be considered in these terms, as a liminal mestiza subject, although her status as a European coloniser markedly differentiated her from the racial subordination faced by Anzaldúa.

[Insert Figure 27.3 here]

One of the earliest autobiographies by a woman, Catalina de Erauso's *Lieutenant Nun: Memoir of a Basque Transvestite in the New World*, chronicles her life of adventure, violence and transgression. Born in 1585, Erauso was raised in a convent but refused to become a nun, and instead absconded from the convent aged 14 and began to dress as a boy and left for the Americas in 1603. She even presented herself as a ship's boy to her own uncle to make her passage on his galleon to her new future. Her uncle grew fond of her on their voyage to what is now Venezuela, but as they were loading gold to return to Europe, she stole 500 pesos and fled, apparently determined to remain in South America where she became a soldier and fought in the Chilean army, eventually rising to the rank of second lieutenant during the Araucanian Wars. She met more of her family along the way, unrecognised by her mother and father in her male guise and unknowingly killing her own brother in a duel.

In her autobiography, Erauso appears as a frontierswoman, roaming the world as she pleases and seeking new lands to discover. The frontier world of Greater Peru and beyond offered the prospects of enhanced social mobility and the potential for great riches for the most fortunate. Moreover, due to her status as a European colonizer, she was able seamlessly to traverse the Americas between Panama, Peru, Chile and Argentina, and eventually across the Atlantic to Europe. Erauso's frontier life and border crossings were only possible due to her also crossing the borders of gender.

By travelling from Europe to the New World, Erauso was able to fashion a new identity and a new life for herself. Crossing borders allowed this new identity to flourish, but also her rebuttal of gender norms allowed her to cross borders in the first place. She embodied a new, male military identity, with all the brawling, gambling and flirting with women that this might suggest. Erauso's male clothing 'not only freed her from womanly obligations, sexual and

otherwise, it also allowed her a freedom, sexual and otherwise, in the world at large' (Stepito 1996, xxxix). Beyond clothing, Erauso cut her hair, used a poultice to reduce her breasts, and was noted as having a few hairs on her chin. As Merrim (1990, 38) has argued, 'For women warriors such as Erauso, the mere change of dress effected a complete change in gender identity'. Erauso's male identity went beyond clothing; it was her behaviour and bearing that marked her out as a (male) soldier (Goldmark 2015). This new gender identity was marked by violence and she admitted to committing multiple murders and with her soldier companions even carved a 12-year-old boy 'into ten thousand pieces' for killing their fieldmaster, who was pillaging the boy's 'Indian' village. They then chased the rest of the village 'slaughtering all the way' (Erauso 1996, 34).

Through her border and gender crossing, Erauso became the object of numerous women's affections, staving off proposals and sexual advances. Velasco (2000, 56) has argued that 'what may have neutralized this negative image in the minds of early modern readers is the fact that the objects of Erauso's disdain were considered inferior both socially and racially to the upper-class European suitor'. Erauso's writings show her as disparaging towards women and explicitly violent against indigenous communities. In one incident, a financially well-off and kind woman offered a future to Erauso and the hand of her daughter. Erauso, however, wrote that she refused, for the woman was a 'half-breed' and her daughter 'as black and ugly as the devil himself, quite the opposite of my taste, which has always run to pretty faces' (Erauso 1996, 28). Through her abuse and deception of women in the Americas she was able to further her own position and that of Spain. She was the coloniser laying claim over the Americas, fighting for the Spanish Empire. It was due to her role in Spain's project of nation building that she was not punished for her transvestitism once it became known. And it was only through her transvestitism that she was able to participate in this project in the first place.

Once unmasked as a woman, Erauso spent three years in Peruvian convents where she, in her own words, 'once again ... donned the veil', and was forced to appear once again as a woman (Erauso 1996, 68). She was sent back to Europe in 1624 where she garnered fame and celebrity, and was courted by 'famous people, princes, bishops, cardinals' (Erauso 1996, 79).

The King of Spain awarded her a military pension and Pope Urban VIII allowed her to live the rest of her days in men's clothing. The bravery, violence and colonising purposes embodied by Catalina de Erauso allowed her to transgress traditional gender norms and dress as a man, and challenge the established idea that transvestism was illegal in Europe at the time. Perhaps feeling confined by European conventions, however, she returned to the New World in 1630 and lived thereafter in Mexico as a mule-driver and merchant under the name Antonio de Erauso. In this period, her use of male clothing was no longer a secret disguise but rather a mark of the privilege she felt she had earned. Just like her four brothers, Erauso ultimately died in South America.

Questions over the authenticity of Erauso's autobiography fits her elusiveness. Her life as a border crosser from the old world to the new, and from female to male, and the unknowability of her gender identity and sexual expression have fuelled considerable interest in her life and swashbuckling adventures. The mystery of Erauso's sexuality has been widely discussed: was she engaging in same-sex flirtation to preserve her disguise and virginity from men, or was she a lesbian and social deviant (Velasco 2000)? This exemplifies the fluid and ambivalent image of Erauso: 'For many she is a heroic soldier, for others she is either a criminal, an example of Basque or Spanish national pride, a eunuch, an exemplary virgin, a transgressive lesbian, or a combination of all these categories' (Velasco 2000, 25).

It was Erauso's life of contradictions that allowed her to dress as a man, which in turn allowed to her cross the borders of the old world and the new. And it was also, of course, her European status that allowed her gender deviance on a continent where non-western ideals of sexuality were violently repressed by colonisers, a class to which she herself belonged. For Erauso, borders were a productive space that allowed her to cross socio-cultural domains. Queer transgression, as embodied by Erauso, was therefore embedded in the project of empire building.

CONCLUSION

The current interest in borders, within geography and beyond, must utilise a historical perspective in order to understand how territorial practices created our zero-sum world divided into nation-states and the violence that this necessitated. Borders are not just violent for migrants trying to cross them in the contemporary world; they have always been violent. Borders are embedded in historical processes of colonialism and the controlling of space through practices of territoriality, and this can be clearly seen in the division of Latin America with the ongoing border disputes on the continent that are rooted in historical maps and claims. This historical understanding of the construction of borders also allows us to better understand the borders that still persist today and the movements that are attempting to decolonise border regimes.

By considering how borders have been refused since their inception and how mobility operated before the creation of the nation-state, it is possible to see the very real precedence for the projects of open borders and no borders. Finally, we cannot fully appreciate borders without considering those who inhabit borderlands, have had borders drawn around them, or have suffered the violence of being a border crosser. And yet, borders can also be emancipatory spaces, as shown through the life of Catalina de Erauso, who, through her literal and metaphorical border crossings, was able to live a life far from that designed for her. Erauso's border crossings did not just transform her own life, however, they also contributed to the colonisation of Latin America.

In this chapter, I have tried to illustrate the importance of historical geography in understanding borders today. Borders cannot be understood just as geographical features. Their complex histories must also be taken into account. Even though they seem fixed and inevitable, borders are relatively recent phenomena that were imposed through violence and control. Borders are socio-political constructions and are not the only way in which the world can be

ordered. Thinking critically about borders allows us to envisage a more just and less violent world.

[TS: insert end notes here]

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1 While it is impossible to know how Catalina de Erauso would have wished to be gendered today (if at all), I follow the conventions of the majority of writers who have chosen to use female pronouns due to Catalina referring to herself as a woman.